

for the dead. What had he discovered against this doctrine? Nothing, absolutely nothing! He denied Purgatory in consequence of his own theories. "We are all saints," he said. But this was too ridiculous to be maintained. Even the Protestants admit of Purgatory, only they do not agree about the definition of the dogma. The Protestant Haase wrote: "Those who die are too good to go to Hell, but are too bad to go to Paradise." Therefore there must be a place where souls are purified to merit eternal glory. De Maistre observes: "Protestants will have Purgatory, for they retain that there must be a place where souls become purified." What is this place if not Catholic Purgatory? Our heart and our reason both require it. Reason says: "If God exists, Purgatory must also exist; if there is no Purgatory there can be no God." This may appear startling, but listen to me. If God exists, He exists as a just God, because if he were not just, He would not be God. Now, to be just He must give to each one what he merits. True justice requires it. If we then admit of reward and punishment, we must also admit of a Paradise and a Hell. It is impossible that the justice of God should leave crimes unpunished and virtues unrewarded, therefore Heaven and Hell exist. "But," you say, "why must we admit of an intermediate place, such as Purgatory?" Friend, do you believe that the supreme destiny of the good after the present life is the enjoyment of God through union with Him? Do you believe that God is perfect justice, perfect sanctity, the enemy of all imperfection and all sin? Do you believe that there are some men who die adorned with the holiest virtues and free from those defects which are the result of our frailty? Yes! Then the soul is made for union with God. But God is perfect purity; therefore the soul must be perfectly pure. It must be purified.

As it rarely occurs that a soul issues really pure from this world, there must be a means for its purification. And Purgatory is this means. We believe that in the next life the good will enjoy Paradise and the wicked will be punished in Hell, and the justice of God would be sufficiently explained by these absolute states of reward and punishment if men died all absolutely good or absolutely wicked. There would be no need of the intermediate state we call Purgatory if there were not these intermediate conditions in the conduct of men.

Do men all die either perfectly innocent or perfectly guilty? We know they do not. Was your mother, who perhaps died lately, pure as an angel, or wicked as a fallen angel? You would not dare to say either one or the other. "She was not quite good, nor was she bad," you would answer. "My mother was good and pious, but—" and in this "but" we find the necessity for Purgatory. With the imperfections which you admit, shall she have winged her flight direct to Heaven, or shall she have been condemned to Hell? Do you not feel the force of this argument? Therefore, there must be a place where venial and limited sins receive a proportionately light and limited chastisement conducive to expiation, so that even without the teaching of our faith, reason itself would suggest Purgatory. And what does the heart say? It needs Purgatory for the consolation of the living as for that of the dead, for without this supplicatory expiation, who could hope to get to Heaven and complete salvation? It would be a vain presumption, and he would be rash who in saying "I hope to be saved," means to say "I am so good and so holy, that if I were to die at this moment I should go straight to Paradise." Such words, even in the mouth of a saint, would they not show an insensate presumption? And